

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TIMING OF FINAL STEPS ON EXCHANGES AGREEMENT

1. DURING LUNCHEON CONVERSATION FEBRUARY 23(SEPTEL), DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER TRHLIK ASKED AMBASSADOR IF U.S. WAS SLOWING DOWN OR HAD STOPPED THE TALKS. AMBASSADOR AND PAO REVIEWED THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE TALKS AND SAID TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN GOING ON AT A DELIBERATE PACE BETWEEN THE PAO AND SCIENCE OFFICER ON THE US SIDE, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND FMTIR ON THE OTHER. US SIDE HOPED TO HAVE A RESPONSE TO SOME SPECIFIC GOC QUEIRES ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE AGREEMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND UNDERSTOOD GOC WAS PROPOSING THAT AN AMERICAN DELEGATION MIGHT COME HERE TO UPDATE THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CZECHOSLOVAK AND AMERICAN ACADEMIES OF SCIENCE. TRHLIK THOUGHT THERE WAS NO REASON WHY THE TECHNICAL TALKS SHOULDN'T CONTINUE AS AT PRESENT, ASSERTING "FOR OUR PART, WE ARE READY TO MOVE QUICKLY TO CONCLUDE THE AGREEMENT", HE ADDED "ON THE U.S. SIDE, THERE APPEARS TO BE SOME RELUCTANCE TO DO BUSINESS WITH US DURING YEARS THAT END WITH '8'." AMBASSADOR SAID THAT WAS NOT THE CASE, BUT THAT IT WAS BEST TO HAVE THE EXCHANGES AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM COMPLETED WITH LANGUAGE AGREED TO BEFORE MOVING TO THE NEXT QUESTION OF WHO SIGNS IT, WHEN AND WHERE.

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2. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH MFA SIXTH DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR ZANTOVSKY ON FEBRUARY 21, DCM TOOK SIMILAR POSITION IN DISCUSSING NEGOTIATIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS. ZANTOVSKY ASKED WHETHER OR NOT USG WAS REALLY INTERESTED IN COMPLETING TALKS AND EMPHASIZED THAT MFA NEED TO KNOW U.S. POSITION IN ORDER TO PREPARE EVENTUAL SIGNING CEREMONY. BY IMPLICATION, ZANTOVSKY INDICATED

CZECHS WOULD STILL LIKE TO SEND DEPUTY MINISTER JABLONSKY TO WASHINGTON FOR SIGNING AND A TOUR D'HORIZON OF BILATERAL RELATIONS. (COMMENT: WE BELIEVE MFA HAS BEEN WANTING TO SCHEDULE A JABLONSKY VISIT THIS SPRING, AFTER THE DUST SETTLES FOLLOWING THE BELGRADE MEETING.)

3. ZANTOVSKY EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT CONTINUING CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS IN LIGHT OF SEVERAL MESSAGES HE HAS RECEIVED LATELY FROM WASHINGTON REPORTING THAT DEPARTMENT OFFICERS HAVE BEEN TELLING CZECHOSLOVAK EMBASSY THE SIGNATURE OF EXCHANGES ACCORD WILL HAVE TO BE POSTPONED UNTIL VERY LATE 1978, OR PERHAPS EVEN 1979. LIKE TRHLIK, HE WONDERED WHETHER USG MIGHT BE CREATING "NEW OBSTACLES".

5. DCM REPLIED THAT EMBASSY CONTINUES TO BELIEVE A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH IS THE PROPER ONE; WE SHOULD PROCEED IN A BUSINESSLIKE MANNER TOWARD COMPLETION OF NEGOTIATIONS, THEN PREPARE THE NEXT STEP-

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SIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE EXCHANGES ACCORD. DCM DENIED US SIDE HAD PLACED ANY OBSTACLES IN PATH OF NEGOTIATIONS AND REVIEWED EMBASSY'S PERCEPTION OF THEIR HISTORY: UMBRELLA AGREEMENT HAD BEEN AGREED UPON DECEMBER 1, 1976; CZECHOSLOVAK SIDE THEN TOOK SEVERAL MONTHS FOR AN INTER-AGENCY APPROVAL PROCESS; AFTER 1977 SUMMER VACATIONS, TALKS TOOK PLACE IN SEPTEMBER ON CULTURAL/ EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM; MORE RECENTLY, NEGOTIATIONS HAVE GONE FORWARD ON REMAINING QUESTIONS IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SCIENTIFIC/TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRAM. IF THERE HAS BEEN AN INORDINATE DELAY IN ALL THIS, HE POINTED OUT, IT OCCURED BECAUSE OF LENGTHY GOC PROCESS IN APPROVING THE UMBRELLA AGREEMENT.

5. ZANTOVSKY ASKED WHETHER EMBASSY COULD PROVIDE MFA IN NEAR FUTURE WITH AUTHORITATIVE USG POSITION ON TIMING OF SIGNING CEREMONY. DCM REITERATED IMPORTANCE OF WAITING UNTIL AFTER NEGOTIATIONS ARE SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED BEFORE TRYING TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SIGNING, BUT INDICATED HE WOULD LOOK INTO THE MATTER.

6. COMMENT: I LOOK FORWARD TO DISCUSSION IN WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK OF TACTICS WE SHOULD EMPLOY FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE WITH REGARD TO THE DRAFTED EXCHANGES AGREEMENT. OBVIOUSLY, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR EMBASSY AND DEPARTMENT OFFICERS TO BE ON THE SAME WAVE LENGTH IN DISCUSSING THE SUBJECT WITH CZECHOSLOVAK OFFICIALS.

7. DECONTROL TWO YEARS AFTER RECEIPT.
FROWICK

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